Availability of Water Resources

4247. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Vision-2010 and 5 gallons of water per person in a day" which appeared in the Newstime dated the 22nd January, 2001;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken in this regard to boost up the availability of water resources?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) and (b) India receives an average annual precipitation of about 4000 Billion Cubic Metre (BCM). As per the assessment made by the Central Water Commission in 1993, about 1869 BCM appears as runoff in the river systems of the country. On an average water availability in the country remains more or less fixed according to the natural hydrologic cycle. According to an international criteria, any situation of yearly water availability of less than 1000 cubic metre (cu.m.) per capita is considered as scarcity condition. The population of India in 1951 was 361 million and the per capita water availability was 5177 cu.m. It is estimated that due to increasing population, the average annual per capita water availability may come down from about 1869 cu.m. at present to about 1610 cu.m. by 2010 A.D. at the national level. Due to the spatial variability of rain in the country and also because of variation in population density, per capita average annual availability of water in different basins also varies from 14,057 cu.m. in Brahmaputra-Barak basin to 307 cu.m. in Sabarmati basin. Further, the temporal variability in the rainfall creates scarcity of water in certain years.

(c) Water resources development including construction of storages for utilization of water is taken up by the State Governments as per their own priorities. Upto 1995, a live storage capacity of 177

Billion Cubic Meter (BCM) has been created by construction of large dams in the country. Besides, projects to add an additional storage capacity of about 75 BCM are under construction and for 132 BCM are under planning. The replenishable ground water is of the order of 432 BCM, out of which about 154 BCM has been developed for use. With the help of these storages and other minor irrigation schemes an irrigation potential of 90 Million hectare (Mha) has been created upto the end of the Eighth Plan against the ultimate irrigation potential of 139.9 Mha in the country.

Government of India is also promoting rain water harvesting through Watershed Management Programme, artificial recharge of ground water and roof-top rain water harvesting under the sector reform project of Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme under the Ministry of Rural Development, for which technical and financial assistance is provided to the State Governments and other implementing agencies. Central Ground Water Board has also taken up pilot studies for artificial ground water recharge. Assistance is also extended to State Governments under Command Area Development Programme for bridging the gap between potential created and utilized. Further, the Government of India has been extending financial assistance under Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme since 1996-97 to State Governments to help them complete the ongoing irrigation projects early.

As a long term measure, National Water Development Agency established in 1982, under Ministry of Water Resources, have formulated National Perspective Plan for Water Resources Development which envisages interlinking between various peninsular rivers and Himalayan rivers for transfer of water from surplus basins to water deficit basins. The Agency has completed pre-feasibility studies of all the 17 water transfer links under the Peninsular rivers development component and 14 water transfer links under the Himalayan rivers development component. Feasibility studies of 5 water transfer links have also been completed.